

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

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a1* 1. A system for facilitating business-to-business transactions comprising:
a network coupled to a plurality of member businesses; and
a clearinghouse computer server associated with the members and coupled
to the members through the network, the clearinghouse receiving and forwarding
electronic messages transmitted between at least two of the plurality of members,
the messages corresponding to communications in a business-to-business
transaction that relate to initiation of the transaction, and at least one of order
fulfillment for the transaction and payment processing for the transaction.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the messages corresponding to
communications in the business-to-business transaction relate to both order
fulfillment for the transaction and payment processing for the transaction.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the messages include at least one of a
purchase order, a purchase order acknowledgement, and an invoice.

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a2* 4. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the clearinghouse computer
server includes a supplier managed inventory component that monitors an inventory
of a first one of the members and in response to the inventory reaching a preset
level, generating and transmitting a purchase order to a second one of the members
that was pre-designated as a supplier for the first member.

5. The computer system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of
members is a shipping company and the clearinghouse computer server includes a

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shipment tracking component that receives shipment tracking information from the shipping company and that provides the shipment tracking information to the members.

6. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the clearinghouse computer server includes a business intelligence component that aggregates data passing through the clearinghouse computer server and that mines the aggregated data for information requested by the members.

7. The computer system of claim 1, wherein at least one of the plurality of members is a shipping company and the clearinghouse computer server includes a logistics procurement component that receives shipment requests from trading members and forwards shipment proposals from the shipping members to the trading members.

8. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the messages are extensible markup language (XML) messages.

9. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the clearinghouse computer server includes a product catalog component that stores a product catalog of products available for sale from the members and forwards results of search requests of the catalog to the members.

10. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the clearinghouse computer includes a regulatory reporting component that receives information relating to a

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required regulatory report from one of the members, generates a regulatory report for the one member, and transmits the report to an appropriate regulatory authority.

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11. A computer network comprising:
a plurality of trading members that buy and sell products through the network;
at least one banking member for providing payment services to the plurality of trading members;
at least one shipping member for providing order fulfillment services to the plurality of trading members; and
a clearinghouse coupled to the trading members, the banking member, and the shipping member, communications between the trading members, banking members, and shipping members being routed through the clearinghouse, and the clearinghouse including software components for managing the services provided by the banking and shipping members to the trading members.

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A3* 12. The network of claim 11, wherein at least a first one of the trading members includes:

an enterprise resource planning system configured to manage resources of the first trading member, including product supply chain management; and

a translation server coupled to the enterprise resource planning system and to the clearinghouse, the translation server converting data in a format of the enterprise resource planning system into a format of the clearinghouse and forwarding the converted data to the clearinghouse; wherein

the converted data corresponds to communications between the first trading member and a second trading member that relates to initiation of a commercial transaction, order fulfillment for the transaction, and payment processing for the transaction.

13. The network of claim 12, wherein the format of the clearinghouse is extensible markup language (XML).

14. The network of claim 11, wherein the payment service provided by the banking member includes purchasing account receivables from the trading members, the banking member calculating the amount to pay for the receivables based on an analysis of a payment history of transactions of trading members made through the clearinghouse.

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15. The computer system of claim 11, wherein the clearinghouse includes a supplier managed inventory component that monitors an inventory of a first one of the trading members and in response to the inventory reaching a preset level, generating and transmitting a purchase order to a second one of the trading members that was pre-designated as a supplier for the first member.

16. The computer system of claim 11, wherein the clearinghouse includes a shipment tracking component that receives shipment tracking information from the shipping member and that provides the shipment tracking information to the trading members.

17. The computer system of claim 11, wherein the clearinghouse includes a business intelligence component that aggregates data passing through the clearinghouse and that mines the aggregated data for information requested by the members.

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18. The computer system of claim 11, wherein the clearinghouse includes a logistics procurement component that receives shipment requests from trading members and forwards shipment proposals from the shipping member to the trading members.

19. The computer system of claim 11, wherein the clearinghouse includes a product catalog component that stores a product catalog of products available for sale from the trading members and forwards results of search requests of the catalog to the trading members.

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20. A method for facilitating business-to-business transactions between members in a trading network comprising:

- receiving a purchase order for a product at a clearinghouse from a first trading member of the network and directed to a second member of the network;
- forwarding the purchase order from the clearinghouse to the second trading member of the network;
- receiving shipment proposals at the clearinghouse from a plurality of shipping members of the network to ship the product associated with the purchase order;
- receiving an invoice at the clearinghouse from the second trading member for the product; and
- forwarding the invoice to the first trading member and to a pre-designated banking member of the network.

21. The method of claim 20, further comprising purchasing account receivables from the second trading member, a value of the account receivables based on an analysis of payment histories of transactions in the network.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein the purchase order, the shipment proposals, and the invoice received at the clearinghouse are in extensible markup language (XML) format.

23. The method of claim 20, further comprising monitoring an inventory of the first trading member and in response to the inventory reaching a preset level, generating and transmitting the purchase order to the second trading member.

26. A system comprising:

an enterprise resource planning computer system configured to manage resources of a company, including the management of supply chain activities of the company; and

a translation server connected to the enterprise resource planning computer system and to a clearinghouse that processes messages, the translation server converting messages from the enterprise resource planning computer system into a format of the clearinghouse and forwarding the converted messages to the clearinghouse, the messages corresponding to communications in a business-to-business transaction that relate to initiation of the transaction, and at least one of order fulfillment for the transaction and payment processing for the transaction.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein the messages corresponding to communications in the business-to-business transaction that relate to both order fulfillment for the transaction and payment processing for the transaction.

28. The system of claim 26, further including a web browser connected to the translation server, the web browser displaying documents formatted in the extensible markup language (XML) format.

29. The system of claim 26, wherein the format of the clearinghouse is the extensible markup language (XML) format.

30. The system of claim 26, wherein the messages include at least one of a purchase order, a purchase order acknowledgement, and an invoice.

31. A method comprising:

generating messages relating to business-to-business commerce transactions at an enterprise resource planning computer system, including generating messages relating to the management of supply chain activities of a company, the messages corresponding to communications in a business-to-business transaction;

converting the messages generated by the enterprise resource planning computer system into extensible markup language (XML) messages; and

transmitting the converted messages over the Internet to a clearinghouse that processes the converted messages and provides services related to order fulfillment for the transaction and payment processing for the transaction.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the services related to order fulfillment include receiving shipment proposals from shipping companies for the transaction.

33. The method of claim 31, wherein the services related to payment processing include the generation of a summary invoice of multiple transactions.

34. The method of claim 31, wherein the services related to payment processing include the purchase of account receivables.